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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the extent and nature of existing and/or planned curricula and training programs that purport to sensitize students and workers to provide social and child protective services to minority clients. The survey of educational institutions and relevant State departments was undertaken in the eight southeastern States. Data revealed that: (1) twelve percent of the responding sources required a course(s) whose titles explicitly connote the sensitization to minority clients needs: (2) one half of the university graduate and undergraduate schools of social work having minority oriented course offerings required at least one such course of some students; and (3) six percent of the respondents offered formalized training programs to develop sensitivity to minority needs. These findings suggest that students/workers are not being prepared well by State agencies and educational institutions to serve the large proportion of cultural, racial, and linguistic minority clients for social services. (Author/APM)

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CURRICULA AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE SOUTHEAST:

SENSITIZATION OF STUDENTS AND WORKERS TO THE NEEDS OF MINORITY (RACIAL, CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC) CLIENTS

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FOREWORD

This research project was designed and implemented to determine the extent and nature of existing and/or planned curricula and training programs in the eight Southeastern states which have as a major purpose the sensitization of students and workers to provide social services in general and child protective services in particular to minority (racial, cultural, linguistic) clients.

The research project represents collaborative efforts between the Region IV Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center which is a major component of the Regional Institute of Social Welfare Research, Inc. (RISWR) and the Research and Demonstration Center of the Atlanta University School of Social Work.

Special recognition and thanks are due Professor Jualynne Dodson, Director of the Research and Demonstration Center for the expert consultation provided and assistance in the development of the questionnaire.

We wish to recognize the contribution of and extend thanks to the following RISWR staff persons: Dr. George Thomas, President; Dr. Anthony LaCavera, Computer Specialist; Ms. Virginia Vaughn, Printshop Operator; and Ms. Linda Bingham and Mrs. Christine Bennett, Secretaries.

Finally, thanks are due to the respondents who, in the end, made it all possible. Special thanks are due to those individuals who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

Clara L. Johnson
Director
Region IV Child Abuse and
Neglect Resource Center

February, 1980

INTRODUCTION

Historically, children have been subordinate beings in most known societies with parents or other caretakers virtually possessing the absolute power of life and death over them. And all too often, throughout time, the exercise of adult powers over children has resulted in their being extremely maltreated and even put to death.

Concern for and the first concerted action on behalf of children being cruely treated in America were initiated during the mid-nineteenth century; however, it was not until the early 1960's that states began to pass child abuse reporting laws which were designed to alter the status of children within the family setting. Through these laws, responsibility for the protection of children reported to be harmed became that of the public social agency through its protective service staff.

The nature of child protective services alone, i.e., primarily involuntary and "authoritarian," suggests possible sources of difficulty in the intervention and total helping process. The chances are even greater when the ingredients of worker-client differences are added.

Worker-client differences stemming from race, culture, and/or language can, and often do, have a devastating effect upon the outcome of a relationship which has as its ultimate goal the amelioration of a "bad" situation.

Given the presenting problem(s) and the unique biases of the client, it becomes the responsibility of the service provider to be in "command" of the helping relationship. Perhaps the simplest equation for the production of culturally competent social service workers is that which requires a knowledge base of relevant information and action steps. Simply put, a "cross-culturally competent worker" has acquired knowledge of the presenting problem(s), the client's unique background and environment, the effect of the problem(s) and environment on the total person, and an understanding of how to utilize these "knowns" to provide services.* Missing from the equation, however, is the component of worker's awareness of his/her own background (prejudices, biases, etc.) in the relationship.

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*A Curriculum in Cross-Cultural Awareness for Human Service Workers, Region X Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, Western Federation for Human Services (1979).

The acquisition of an adequate problem-oriented knowledge base seems simple enough. Most colleges and universities require certain courses in psychology and sociology, regardless of the degree sought, which generally address such concerns. *It is the knowledge of clients from diverse backgrounds and awareness of one's own biases which elude the average worker.*

While it is generally acknowledged that race, culture, and language factors can serve as a deterrent to the delivery of effective social services in general and protective services in particular, the immediate past has witnessed little movement toward rectifying the situation. However, it goes without saying that more effective intervention into the lives of families on the behalf of children will only ensue as more workers become better prepared to deal with diversity in the client population.

The future may hold promise. In addition to the course offerings of schools of social work, several cross-cultural curricula are presently being tested.

One problem in looking only to schools of social work as training grounds, however, lies in the fact that the overwhelming majority of workers in the human services will be virtually unaffected. Besides the fact that many workers enter the field from unrelated educational backgrounds, the move toward greater utilization of lay therapists and social work aides underscores that point.

In order to determine the extent and nature of existing and/or planned curricula and training programs in the eight Southeastern states which have as a major purpose the sensitization of students and workers to provide social services to minority (racial, cultural, linguistic) clients, a survey of educational institutions and relevant state departments was conducted during the summer, 1979. This report presents the major findings from the study.

PROCEDURE

The study was conducted through the use of a structured questionnaire which was mailed to the deans of schools of social work and/or, where appropriate, to heads of sociology/human services departments of every identified post-high school educational institution and to relevant state departments in each of the eight Southeastern states. A follow-up request was sent out approximately two months after the initial mailing.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit general and specific information regarding: (1) the extent and nature of formal course offerings which have as a major goal the sensitization of students and/or workers to the needs of minority clients, (2) the extent and nature of formalized training programs to accomplish the same, and (3) the anticipated plans to improve the current status of such courses and training programs within the region.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

A truly regional study for the overall purpose of determining the extent and nature of formal courses and training programs which have as a major goal the preparation of students and workers to provide social services to minority clients would ideally include an assessment of every relevant educational and service providing agency in every state within the region. The study population included all educational institutions rather than only the 45 accredited graduate and undergraduate social work programs simply because of the practical consideration that the majority of human services workers do not enter the job market through that channel.

While the intent in the design was to obtain data from the total population, we expectedly fell short of realizing this goal.

Of a total of 516 questionnaires sent out throughout the region, 293 or 56.8 percent were returned. Of these, 280 or 54.3 percent were useable and serve as the basis for data analysis.

The level of response by state can be noted in Figure 1. A relatively high return rate was realized from Georgia and Tennessee. In both states, over seventy percent of the questionnaires were returned. In terms of subsequent analyses, perhaps a more pertinent indicator of the extent of participation lies in the response rate by the general type of responding institution/agency. As shown in Figure 2, the response rate was the highest among universities with graduate and/or undergraduate departments or schools of social work and relevant state departments. Thus, while state-by-state participation was generally at a relatively low level, the high level of participation from the institutions/agencies which are most likely to be expected to offer courses and/or training around the present concerns yields a sound basis from which to make generalizable statements regarding the present status of such curricula and/or training within the region.

Figure 1

Level of Participation by State

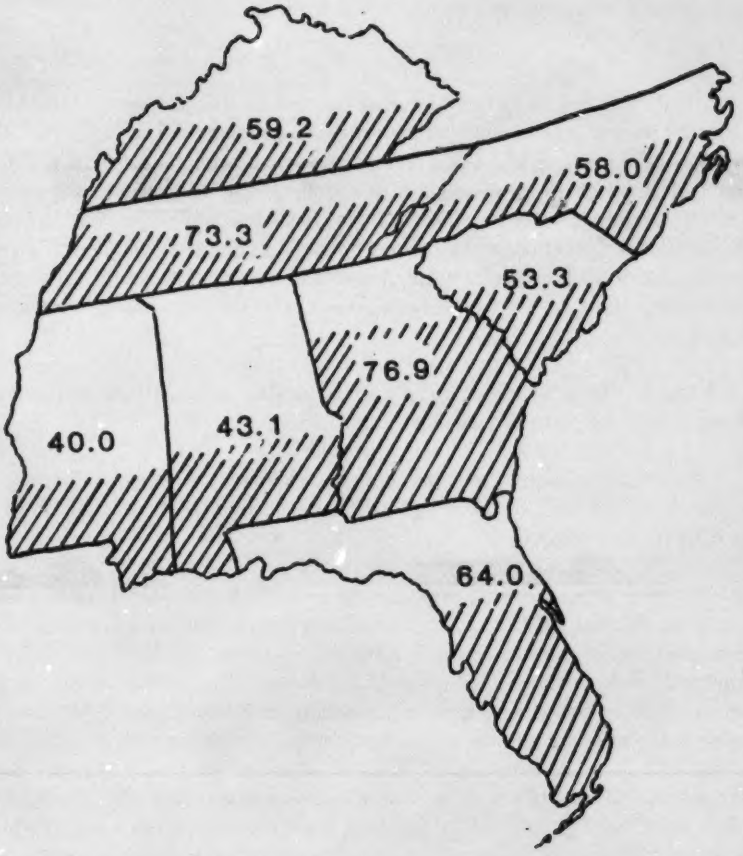
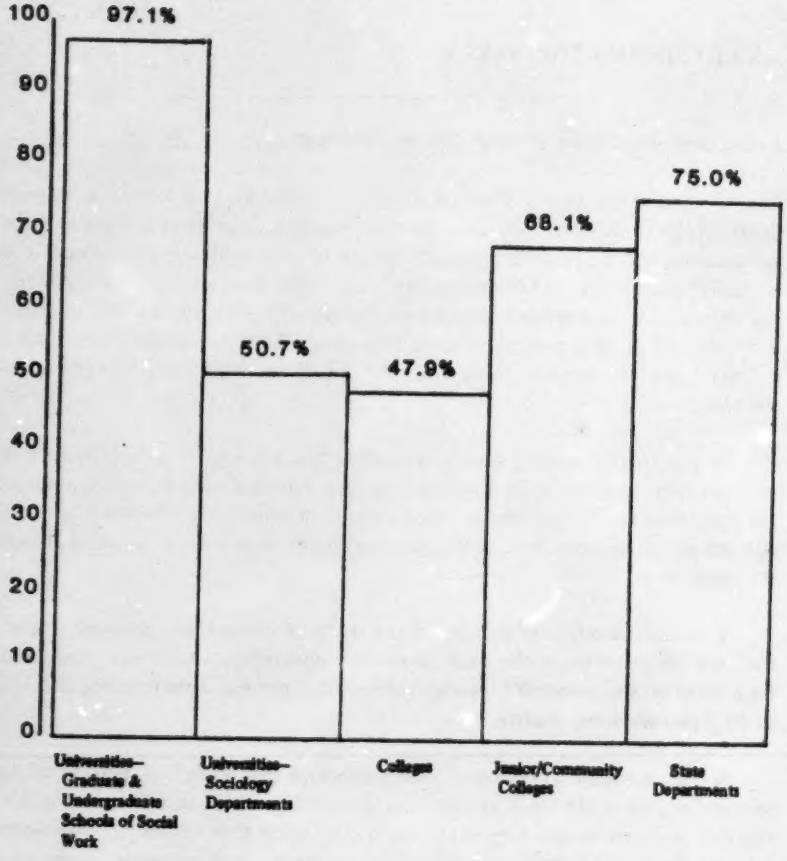


Figure 2

Level of Participation within the Region
by Type of Source



LIMITATIONS

There are two major limitations to this study. First, while collaborative efforts went into the development of the instrument, it was not subjected to a pretest. Had this been accomplished, necessary adjustments could have been made. Secondly, generalizations for the total population of data sources cannot be made. While it appears that the findings would apply to the majority of the types of sources tapped, the findings have relevance only to the study sample.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Extent and Nature of Formal Course Offerings

In terms of the extent of course offerings, 118 or 42.1 percent of the respondents (N=280) indicated offering one or more courses having as a major goal the enhancement of the students'/workers' ability to work with minority clients. Expectedly, such courses were most likely to be offered in schools of social work. All of the nine respondents representing university graduate schools of social work and 22 or 88.0 percent of those of undergraduate schools indicated such a course(s) was offered. See Table 1 for the complete distribution by type of responding source.

Of the 118 responding sources indicating that a course(s) was offered, 76 or 64.4 percent indicated such a course or at least one of several was a requirement for some students. There was not such a required course according to 37 or 31.4 percent of the sources. Five or 4.2 percent of the respondents failed to answer the question.

A somewhat different picture of the status of courses, i.e., required or elective, was obtained when the total number of courses/responses was considered. Of a total of 306 identified courses, 154 or 50.3 percent were required and 152 or 49.7 percent were elective.

A close scrutiny of course offerings indicates that 85 or 74.6 percent of the respondents (N=114) listed at least one course title which was not generic, i.e., the title unquestionably suggests a major goal being that of dealing with issues relevant to understanding minorities. Interestingly, however, only 34 or 40.0 percent of these respondents indicated that such a course(s) was required of some students.

Table 1

FORMAL COURSE(S) AND TRAINING PROGRAMS OFFERED – NUMBER AND PERCENT BY TYPE SOURCE

Source	Formal Course(s)? Yes No.	Yes %	No No.	No %	Formalized Training Programs Yes No.	Yes %	No No.	No %
University, Graduate School of Social Work	9	100.0	0	--	2	22.2	7	77.8
University, Undergraduate School of Social Work	22	88.0	3	12.0	3	12.0	22	88.0
University, Sociology Dept.								
Graduate	5	83.3	1	16.7	0	--	6	100.0
Undergraduate	18	51.4	17	48.6	3	8.6	32	91.4
College, Sociology Dept.								
Undergraduate degree in Social Work/Welfare	32	61.5	20	38.5	3	5.8	49	94.2
Minor/Concentration/ Other	20	38.5	32	61.5	2	3.8	50	96.2
Junior/Community College	17	18.1	77	81.9				
State Department								
Health	0	--	1	100.0	0	--	1	100.0
Social Services	0	--	8	100.0	4	50.0	4	50.0
Mental Health/ Retardation	0	--	5	100.0	0	--	5	100.0
Not Indicated	0	--	1	100.0	1	100.0	0	--

Based on self-identification of source by respondent.
Self-identified source N is greater than sample total due to several sources indicating course offered at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

Of more importance is the offering of courses by the self-identified type of institution or source (Table 1). Of the 31 schools of social work (graduate and undergraduate) in a university setting indicating a course was offered, 27 or 87.1 percent offered at least one course which appears to explicitly address the major concern. Eighteen (18) or 78.3 percent of the 23 university departments of sociology, 24 or 75.0 percent of the 32 college sources offering a degree or certificate in social work/welfare, all of those offering other degrees with minors, concentration, or emphasis in social work/welfare (N=20), and only 6 or 35.3 percent of the 17 junior colleges, offered such courses.

While noting the status–elective or required–of these relevant courses of the institutions' overall listing of courses, a noteworthy observation was made; namely, the existence of the courses is not an adequate indicator of the extent to which students are exposed to them. For, indeed, only about half of the schools of social work (N=27) and the junior/community colleges (N=6) indicated that at least one such course was required of some students. Less than ten percent of the university departments of sociology (N=18) and just over a third of the college sociology departments offering a minor, concentration, or emphasis in social work/welfare (N=20) made such a course a requirement. Colleges offering undergraduate degrees/certificates in social work/welfare are the most likely to require students to take such a course–15 or 62.5 percent of the 24. See Figure 3.

Extent and Nature of Formalized Training Programs

Only 18 or 6.4 percent of the 280 respondents indicated their school/department/agency offered a **training program** (*other than student placements*) which is designed to prepare and/or enhance students'/workers' ability to deliver services to minority clients.*

As shown in Table 2, responding sources which offered formal courses were as likely as those without course offerings to offer a formalized training program –8 or 6.8 percent of the former and 10 or 6.2 percent of the latter. Perhaps the

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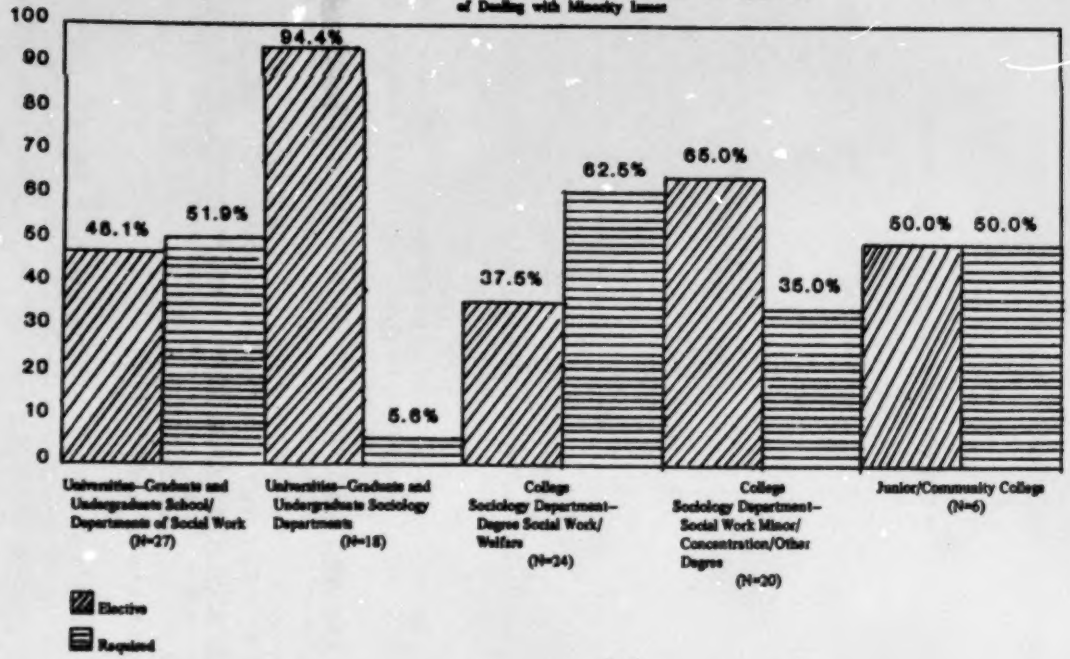
*While 32 respondents indicated a formalized training program was offered, 14 were considered inappropriate as the length of time of the complete program, e.g., 2 years and/or the indicated staff, e.g., field supervisor, suggested student placements/internships rather than training as is commonly defined.

Figure 3

Requirement Status of Courses which Seem to Represent the Explicit Goal of Dealing with Minority Issues



most significant observation is the finding that 125 or 44.6 percent of the total number of responding institutions, departments, and agencies (N=280) offer neither a formal course nor a training program in an effort to prepare students/workers to deliver social services to minority clients.

Table 2

EXISTING TRAINING PROGRAMS

Formal Course(s) Offered?	A Formalized Training Program Is Offered?						Total
	Yes		No		NR		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	8	6.8 44.4	107	90.7 46.1	3	2.5 10.0	118
No	10	6.2 55.6	125	77.2 53.9	27	16.7 90.0	162
Totals	18	6.4	232	82.9	30	10.7	280

Top percentages based on row totals, the bottom on column totals.

The providers of formalized training programs are outlined in Table 3. Interestingly, over one-fourth of the programs were offered by state departments.

The few training programs that are offered are generally not specifically designed for and/or directed to students/workers in the area of child protective services (CPS)—child abuse and neglect. Just over a third of the respondents indicated such a specific focus. There were some apparent differences when comparing sources that did and did not offer a course. As shown in Table 4, one-half of the sources that offered a formal course and a training program (N=8) indicated a specific CPS focus of the training. This compared to less than a fourth of those without a formal course(s) (N=10).

In terms of staffing patterns, just over one-fourth of the respondents offering a training program (N=18) utilized in-house staff only; two-thirds utilized consultants in conjunction with their own staff. Again, some differences were noted between the staffing pattern of those sources offering a formal course(s) and those which did not. Only 12.5 percent of the former (N=8) compared to

Table 3

SOURCES OFFERING TRAINING PROGRAMS

Source Offering Training	A Formal Course(s) Is Offered?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
University–Graduate & Undergraduate Social Work	5	100.0 62.5	0	--- ---	5	27.8
University–Sociology Department	1	33.3 12.5	2	66.7 20.0	3	16.7
College–Undergraduate Social Work/Welfare	2	66.7 25.0	1	33.3 10.0	3	16.7
College–Other Degree or Social Work Minor/Concentration	0	--- ---	2	100.0 20.0	2	11.1
State Department–Social Services*	0	--- ---	5	100.0 50.0	5	27.8
Totals	8	44.4	10	55.6	18	100.0

Top percentages based on row totals, the bottom on column totals.
*Includes (1) unidentified state department.

Table 4

THE FOCUS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

Training Specifically CPS?	A Formal Course(s) Is Offered?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	4	66.7 50.0	2	33.3 22.2	6	35.3
No	4	36.4 50.0	7	63.6 77.8	11	64.7
Totals	8	47.1	9	52.9	17	100.0

NR = 1

Top percentages based on row totals, the bottom on column totals.

forty percent of the latter (N=10) indicated only in-house staff were utilized. See Table 5 for the complete distribution.

Table 5

STAFFING OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

	A Formal Course(s) Is Offered?					
	Yes		No		Total	
Staffing Pattern	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
In-house Staff	1	25.0 12.5	4	75.0 40.0	5	27.8
Outside Consultant(s)	0	— —	1	100.0 10.0	1	5.6
Both of the Above	7	58.3 87.5	5	41.7 50.0	12	66.7
Totals	8	44.4	10	55.6	18	100.0

Top percentages based on row totals, the bottom on column totals.

A relevant question at this point is whether or not minorities are utilized in training efforts. According to Table 6, it would seem that minorities are utilized to a great extent as indicated by 13 or 72.2 percent of the respondents. Minority staff were more likely to be utilized by sources which did not offer relevant formal courses as indicated by 80.0 percent of these sources (N=10) and 62.5 percent of those offering formal courses (N=8).

Table 6

UTILIZATION OF MINORITY STAFF IN TRAINING PROGRAMS

	A Formal Course(s) Is Offered?					
	Yes		No		Total	
Minorities Utilized?	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	5	38.5 62.5	8	61.5 80.0	13	72.2
No	3	60.0 37.5	2	40.0 20.0	5	27.8
Totals	8	44.4	10	55.6	18	100.0

Top percentages based on row totals, the bottom on column totals.

Planned Course Offerings and Training Programs

If the present state-of-affairs falls short with respect to the extent to which students and workers are being prepared specifically—through formal course work and training programs—to deal more effectively with minority clients, prospects for the future are not enhanced by anticipated changes.

While just over forty percent of the sources offered courses which are designed to prepare students or workers for delivering services to minority clients, only 2 additional sources indicated such a course was anticipated, both being college sociology departments offering concentrations in social services.

The future is equally as dim in regard to the establishment of formalized training programs. Only seven sources indicated that such a program is being planned, with planning among two (2) being contingent upon acquiring federal funding. Three sources which did not offer a formal course(s)—two (2) junior/community colleges and one university undergraduate school of social work—and four sources offering courses—two (2) university graduate and one undergraduate schools of social work and one (1) college sociology department offering a degree in social work—are planning to institute a training program.

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

While the offering of formal courses designed to enhance students'/workers' ability to work with cultural/racial/linguistic minority clients was at a low level as indicated by the fact that just over forty percent of the sources offered such a course, the extent to which students/workers could prepare for the responsibility was even more severely questioned when considering the fact that only three-fourths of those sources listed courses whose titles unquestionably appeared to address the concern. Of these, only 34 or 40.0 percent (N=85) made such a course a requirement. Put another way, only 34 or 12.1 percent of the responding sources (N=280) required a course(s) whose titles explicitly connote the sensitization to minority clients' needs, problems, etc. Thus, one could well conclude that the majority of students/workers assume responsibility for the delivery of social services to minority clients without specific course work designed to enhance their task performance.

This conclusion would appear to hold even when considering the type of responding source. For example, only about one-half of the university graduate and undergraduate schools of social work having specifically identified minority—

oriented course offerings required at least one such course of some students (presumably those being prepared to enter the human services).*

Formalized training programs designed to bring about sensitivity of students and/or workers to the needs of minority clients were virtually nonexistent; only 18 or 6.4 percent of the respondents (N=280) offered such a program. Only 5 or 27.8 percent of these were offered by relevant state departments.

This general lack of opportunity to enhance students'/workers' ability to deliver social services to minority clients through "on-the-job" training efforts leads one to conclude that, if such an orientation on the part of students and workers is considered relevant to the delivery of social services, state departments as hiring agents are either unaware of the extent to which students are being so prepared or are negligent in carrying out the responsibility which inevitably becomes theirs.

These findings clearly suggest that students/workers are not being prepared well by state agencies and educational institutions to serve the very large proportion of all social service clients that falls within the classification of cultural, racial, and/or linguistic minorities.

It is hoped that this report will prompt broader official recognition of this less than sanguine state of affairs among state agencies and educational institutions and from this, lead to concerted joint development of more pertinent training and educational experiences.

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*The picture becomes even less optimistic in this regard when considering the fact that the overwhelming majority of public agency social services workers hold bachelor degrees in areas other than social work/welfare.